



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Silver Spring, MD 20910

OFFICE OF OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
(NOAA) Programs using Research Vessels at
NOAA Cooperative Institutes (CIs), NOAA Office
of Marine and Aviation Operations and NOAA CIs

FROM: John Cortinas, Ph.D., Chairperson
NOAA Research Council CI Committee

SUBJECT: CI Committee Memorandum #4: Funding Research
Vessel Use at Some Institutions with NOAA-
Sponsored CIs

DATE: December 15, 2006

This memorandum is being issued by the NOAA Research Council CI Committee to explain the procedure for funding research vessel use at some Institutions with NOAA-sponsored CIs. This memorandum does not require any NOAA program to fund shiptime through a CI; instead, it describes an alternative funding mechanism that may be more beneficial than other available options. The advantage to NOAA programs of using the mechanism described in this memorandum lies in the possibility of saving time and money by interacting directly with a NOAA CI for vessel use and funding shiptime within the framework of the existing CI financial assistance award. The information in this memorandum will be added to the next revision of the CI Interim Handbook, which is available at the NOAA CI website, <http://www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci>.

1) Background

NOAA currently supports CIs at universities and research institutions across the United States, some of which operate research vessels with operational and scientific capabilities comparable to those in NOAA's own fleet. (A list of all research vessels currently operated by institutions with NOAA-sponsored CIs is available on the NOAA CI website, <http://www.nrc.noaa.gov/ci>.) NOAA's access to these vessels for NOAA objectives has traditionally been exercised through such intermediaries as the National Science Foundation and the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS), an organization of 61 academic institutions and national laboratories involved in oceanographic research (<http://www.unols.org>).

NOAA is authorized to provide funding for the use of UNOLS and non-UNOLS research vessels for NOAA objectives through a CI's cooperative agreement provided that the two conditions described in the next section are satisfied. Congress granted the Department of Commerce (DOC) this authority in 2003 (P. L. 108-7, reauthorized in futurity under



118 Stat. 71 (January 23, 2004)). The authority provided by 118 Stat. 71 (January 23, 2004) allows the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, as delegated the authority granted to the Secretary of Commerce (DOO 10-15) to enter into cooperative agreements with the Joint and Cooperative Institutes as designated by the [Under Secretary] to use the personnel, services, or facilities of universities and other organizations for research, education, training, and outreach to carry out the mission of NOAA. This authority is unique because it expands the purposes for which the funds may be used under a financial assistance award to include the use of personnel, services and facilities of the research/parent institutions without the requirement to execute a separate procurement contract or other funding instrument if they are associated with the research themes described in the CI award. (See the CI website for a list of research themes at each CI.)

2) Procedures

Two key conditions must be met to fund research vessel use through a CI cooperative agreement:

- 1) CIs for which NOAA expects to use a vessel to directly carry out specific research, education, training, and outreach objectives of NOAA must be designated by the DOC Secretary or the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere. (A list of designated CIs is provided on the CI website.)
- 2) The authority of NOAA to use a cooperative agreement to fund the use of a vessel cannot be broader than the purposes and scope of work under the award or the memorandum of agreement incorporated into the award. There must be a linkage between the research themes delineated in the cooperative agreement and the purpose for which NOAA will use the vessel. In addition, use of such authority can not be used to circumvent competitive requirements for goods or services.

If these conditions are met, the NOAA program can contact the CI's primary administrative contact (see the CI Web site for these contacts) to discuss the availability of the required vessel and request a proposal detailing the activities and costs associated with the vessel time. If both of these conditions are not met, then NOAA programs should contact NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations for other options. To receive NOAA funding for the vessel time, the CI must prepare and submit a proposal through Grants.gov that describes the activities and costs associated with the research cruise. The proposal should clearly identify the approved CI research theme associated with the activity and provide a copy of any documents that justify the daily shiprate.

After contacting the primary CI administrative contact, the NOAA program must contact the primary NOAA administrative person associated with the CI (see the CI Web site for these contacts) to discuss the internal procedures for transferring NOAA funding to the CI.